



*Massage Today*

January, 2004, Vol. 04, Issue 01

## **A Classic Work Comp Case**

By Vivian Madison-Mahoney, LMT

I decided to start this year off on a lighter note with a story someone e-mailed to me: a bricklayer's accident report that was printed in the newsletter of the Australian equivalent of the Workers' Compensation Board.

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to your request for additional information in "Block 3" of the accident report form.

I put "poor planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation, and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found that I had some bricks left over which, when weighed later, were found to be slightly in excess of 500 lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley, which was attached to the side of the building on the sixth floor. Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the bricks.

You will note in "Block 11" of the accident report form that I weigh 135 lbs. Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel, which was now proceeding downward at an equal, impressive speed. This explained the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collar bone, as listed in "Section 3" of the accident report form.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of beginning to experience pain. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks, that barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs. (I refer you again to my weight.)

As you can imagine, I began a rapid descent, down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth and several lacerations of my legs and lower body. Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks and fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain, unable to move, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope and as I lay there watching, the empty barrel begin its journey back down onto me. This explains the two broken legs. I hope this answers your inquiry.

*- John Doe, an injured worker*

Isn't it just like an insurance company adjuster to want to know every single detail? I sincerely wish all of you a very special 2004!

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Click [here](#) for more information about Vivian Madison-Mahoney, LMT.



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